

Climate Adaptation and Resilience



Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London SW1A 2AA
Sent by email only

100 Parliament Street
London SW1A 2BQ

28 October 2025

Dear Prime Minister

Climate Adaptation and Resilience

We are writing to offer our support in delivering your manifesto commitment to achieve sustainable growth and improve resilience through climate adaptation.

The focus on climate adaptation at COP30 highlights a growing need to build resilience to the impacts of climate change around the world. The UK is well positioned to deal with this threat and is already taking positive steps. We have world-leading expertise, notably in climate services and climate risk analytics, which can unlock new markets, jobs and export opportunities; we have the Climate Change Committee and the National Adaptation Plan; and initial steps have been taken to incorporate climate adaptation into major infrastructure planning.

We must now build on these strengths and address climate adaptation jointly with climate mitigation as a national, cross-government priority.

The impacts of climate change are already being felt in the UK, and we can see the costs of inaction on growth, security, and wellbeing. The Environment Agency reports that around 6.3 million properties (homes and businesses) in England are in areas at risk of flooding,¹ and the Office for Budget Responsibility forecasts an 8% negative impact to our GDP in a near-3-degree scenario.²

Effective adaptation will require coordinated action across multiple levels, from households and local authorities to regulators and international partners. Our recommendations focus on leadership required from the centre of government.

Recommendation 1: Number 10 and Cabinet Office should ensure each department has a set of specific and measurable climate adaptation targets.

We endorse work by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs to help coordinate cross-government adaptation targets, but this needs support from the centre of government to ensure progress; overcome departmental silos; and ensure adaptation and climate risks are integrated with all relevant policies. Climate change has implications right across government, from health and housing to transport and business.

¹ The Environment Agency (2024). National assessment of flood and coastal erosion risk in England 2024. Available at: [National assessment of flood and coastal erosion risk in England 2024 - GOV.UK](#)

² The Office for Budget Responsibility (2024). Fiscal risks and sustainability. Available at: [CP 1142 – Office for Budget Responsibility Fiscal risks and sustainability](#)

The Climate Resilience Steering Board should support the monitoring and evaluation of progress, with independent assessment being provided by the Climate Change Committee. We offer to provide further advice on targets based on available scientific evidence on climate risks.

By implementing a strong domestic adaptation framework, the UK can demonstrate leadership and influence global standards and practices.

Recommendation 2: Cabinet Office should commission a spatial dashboard that monitors and models climate risks and impacts over time under all scenarios. This should be used to inform policy and spending decisions to drive progress and ensure value for money.

The UK has good spatial climate risk data for floods (river, coastal, surface water) and droughts, but weaker data for storms, heat stress, wildfires, subsidence, agricultural yields, and biodiversity impacts. We also lack data to track how risk is changing through time (e.g., year on year), or the ability to monitor and model the benefits of adaptation on the level of climate risks. Innovation is moving at pace in both the private and public sector to use AI to forecast climate hazards. Such innovation will assist in making a spatial dashboard but does not replace the need for one.

While we can estimate how much adaptation costs, there are only a very small number of interventions (e.g., flood defences, reservoirs) where we can say how much they will reduce risk by and what the residual risk will be.

A spatial dashboard that includes present and future risks under all scenarios; monitoring of adaptation; and the risk-reducing benefits and co-benefits that it has achieved could support policy and spending decisions on additional adaptation measures needed. It would also empower local and private sector stakeholders to take appropriate responsibility for risk management.

The Fourth Climate Change Risk Assessment (CCRA4) Technical Report by the Climate Change Committee will be delivered in mid-2026 and should provide new data on some of the risks, evidence, and metrics for the dashboard.³

Recommendation 3: Number 10 should define and communicate the residual risks relating to climate change, how those residual risks will be managed, and how to navigate the inevitable trade-offs.

Adaptation creates co-benefits, such as nature recovery, health and biodiversity, but it also requires trade-offs, including constraints on development in high-risk locations, and up-front resilience costs in infrastructure and buildings that only pay back over time.

It is not affordable nor cost-beneficial to protect everywhere and against every risk, yet we lack strategies for managing chronic and acute residual risks of climate change (i.e. the risks that will not be addressed by cost-beneficial planned adaptation).

³ The Climate Change Committee (2024), Proposed methodology for the Fourth Climate Change Risk Assessment – Independent Assessment (CCRA4-IA). Available at: [Proposed methodology for the Fourth Climate Change Risk Assessment - Independent Assessment \(CCRA4-IA\) - Climate Change Committee](#)

Government should communicate clearly the respective roles for delivering and funding climate adaptation including individual departments; local authorities; devolved governments; the private and voluntary sectors; and households. This should include clear guidance on tolerable risk to communities and the potential for unequal impacts on vulnerable populations.

We have previously advised on how to incentivise further private investment in climate adaptation and resilience.⁴

Recommendation 4: Number 10 should lead communication to the public on the importance of climate adaptation, the risks and actions that are already being taken to adapt.

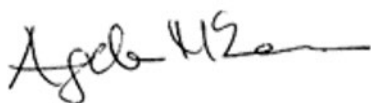
Adaptation efforts depend on national behaviour change, making public engagement critical for success. Clear, honest communication and public engagement from the centre of government is important for ensuring that challenges, actions and choices are well-understood.

Public-facing communication should rigorously describe climate changes and impacts that are occurring now, and that are anticipated in the future; the steps that are already being taken to adapt to climate change and the benefits that is yielding; and the additional action that is needed by the public and private sectors, individuals and communities, to ensure that we are resilient to the impacts of climate change. Communication should consider the potential for unequal impacts of climate change on vulnerable populations.

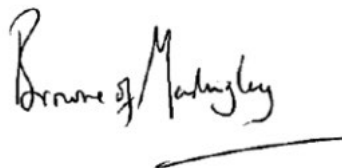
Adapting to climate change is not easy but through strong political commitment the UK has an opportunity to ensure resilient growth, demonstrate leadership, and set international ambition at COP30 and beyond.

We are grateful to Council members for developing these recommendations, in particular, Professor Jim Hall, Professor Dame Julia Black, Mark Enzer, Sir John Lazar and Professor Brooke Rogers.

Yours sincerely,



Dame Angela McLean
Co-chair



Lord Browne of Madingley
Co-chair

⁴ [Letter to the Prime Minister on incentivising private investment in climate adaptation and resilience - GOV.UK](#)